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CONCERNING RECENT BOOKS AND BOOKMAKING.

It is the habit of most critics of fiction to class everything of which they speak as belonging either to the school of the Idealist or the Realist. There are, however, figures in literature that seem to demand recognition as holding a place neither in the one nor the other, but midway between the two. When the time arrives for looking backward over the year's productions, this fascinating class will be found to have received a most noteworthy addition from the hand of Pierre Loti. "Le Livre de la Pitié et de la Mort," which made its appearance almost immediately after Monsieur Viaud's triumphant entry into the Académie Française, has awakened a more unusual appreciation in the present occupant of Monsieur Feuillet's seat than has any of his previous work, "Mon Frère Yves" not excepted. To have been the successful candidate, against Monsieur Zola, for this chair of Utrecht velvet, is, in itself, sufficient notoriety to insure rather more than the nine days' gossip; but Pierre Loti's fame rests upon a firmer base than the cupola of the edifice beneath which he is now receiving his apotheosis.

Monsieur Viaud's advent into letters was made some dozen years ago with "Pêcheur d'Islande." Entering the French navy at the age of seventeen, he made his first voyage in the *Decrès* to the North Sea and to Iceland, during which he experienced the novelty of these exquisite emotions he so delicately recorded in his first book. They who produce at their first leap so nearly the best which is theirs, are rare; but rarer still is he who finds, not only his own country, but all Europe, acknowledging his pre-eminence from the outset. Completely unlettered, so to speak, Loti has achieved, by sheer intuition and poignancy of sensation, what no man of his day and generation may lay claim to. A young French critic has recently spoken of Loti as being *violamment sensuel*, a qualification which M. Eduard Delille upholds to too great a length. With no trace of classicism; without mastery of form or style; exiled by his long, almost unbroken, voyages, it is but natural that the impressions made upon his sensitive Breton spirit should be largely through physical sensation; but they do not stop there. The mere fact of his impressionism being received through the senses is not sufficient to uphold his countryman's theory; one whose wisdom becomes visible in considering "Le Livre de la Pitié et de la Mort"—a book of which M.

Delille makes no mention, although it had appeared some time previous to his restricted criticism.

"The Book of Pity and of Death" consists of eleven tales filled with a love, as broad and *naïf*, for all that lives, as any book the century has seen. If its *motif* is not in direct opposition to the tone of its time, as has been asserted, it is surely in advance of it. In "Mon Frère Yves," in "Le Mariage de Loti," "Madame Chrysanthème," "Le Roman d'un Enfant," and "Propos d'Exile," we find Monsieur Viaud's sympathy always largely and earnestly expressed for those souls cast out by humanity. None are too small or too utterly disinherited of mankind to be withheld from the impulse of his charity. "The Slaughter of an Ox at Sea," or the pitiable downfall into the banalities of civilization of Queen Pomarié, are spectacles soliciting and receiving his utmost compassion; the nobleness of attitude toward Yves is as ideal in its perfection as that which we find expressed with so much reverence for Aunt Claire; and Rarahu and Madame Chrysanthème are filled with the divinity of Christianity not taught in formal creeds. Loti has conceived no character that is not Real and Ideal at the same time,—characters woven from the actualities of existence, yet suffused with that fine essence we oppose to all actualities. Liberal and just at once, with human attributes, neither bound by the coarseness or cynicism of the Materialist nor suffocated with the wild vagaries and utter impossibilities of the Romanticist, we have in these admirable stories that true delicacy of perception which is unknown beyond Gaul, tracing for itself imperishable rhythm in the hearts of those who appreciate that Truth which is Beauty. Though he has been said to be a follower of Flaubert, Monsieur Viaud is master, not pupil. The author of "Salammbô" has no art to teach him who can draw in so clear an outline the delicate and mysterious picture of Tahiti. Loti stands alone upon a solitary pedestal, a monument reared by Art, not Artifice.



The utter lack of originality in the forms of ornamental bindings and title-pages brought out in this country is one of the chief misfortunes to be deplored in the progress of our bookmaking. Houses whose place is in the front rank of American publishers, whose influence is felt abroad as well as here, and whose wealth is reckoned by tens of millions, still persist in boldly plagiarising the artistic work produced in England. As example, some months ago Mr. Herbert Horne issued semi-privately from the Chiswick press a limited

edition of his poems, the title-page of which is a specimen of the quaint simplicity which is presumably from the hand of Selwyn Image. Hardly was the ink dry on these modest leaves before "Lyrics by Cora Fabbri" appeared, bearing the imprint of an old New York firm, having a title which, though of less strength and vigour, is in meaning exactly similar. T. Fisher Unwin is publishing a juvenile series of duodecimos, cheaply but tastefully bound in white cloth, on which is stamped in colours a heavy diaper pattern, which extends over the smoothly-cut edges as well,—a pleasing departure from acknowledged conventions in these days whose cry is for novelties. Immediately a house of years and reputation, as such establishments go with us, gluts every book-shop of the land with such weak sophistry as "A Little Norsk" and "Gramercy Park;" and others are fast following upon their heels as we go to press. Messrs. Houghton & Mifflin have done more for us in their conservative way toward the improvement of the art of bookmaking than any other six houses; as evidence they submit such specimens as Dr. Holmes' "One Hoss Shay," with Mr. Pyle's illustrations; "Cabot's Life of Emerson," especially the large paper edition, and Martin Brimmer's thoughtful essays on Egypt. This desire to pillage the efforts of others comes, not so much from a lack of talent, but from the lack of sufficient appreciation. Some of those in authority know what is good, and admire it in their own rapacious way, but not to an extent which will permit their encouraging or maintaining it at its best. Such volumes as "She Stoops to Conquer," with Mr. Abbey's drawings; "Robin Hood," and "The Wonder Clock," beside a few others that bear Mr. Howard Pyle's name, will always be sources of eternal delight the world over—the credit, however, is due, not to the various houses that publish them, but to the artists themselves.



To record the progressive influences in such a life as that of Edward Burne-Jones is not a task of consummate ease, and when one who has but little critical sense and next to no knowledge of the technique of art makes such an attempt, the result is no better than might be expected. The stout folio which Mr. Malcom Bell has prepared and issued through George Bell & Sons, London, is, notwithstanding the shortcomings of the letterpress, most welcome as the fullest representation of the achievements attained by a pre-Raphaelite yet gathered into compact form. Unless undertaken by a critic whose acumen were of a sort unlike Mr. Bell's, the

illustrations for such a volume must prove its greatest value, and in this "Record and Review" it must be felt, from a purely artistic standpoint, that the seventy-nine reproductions might better have appeared in a portfolio by themselves than serve as the neck about which so ponderous a millstone should hang. Some dozen or more of the masterpieces are given in photogravure, which are more than praiseworthy in the brilliant execution of detail, if they lack the colour values of the originals. Many of the zinc-plates, notably the *Wood Nymph* and the *Annunciation*, seem to lose even less in the process of reproduction, and are nearly all from the wonderful photographs of Mr. Hollyer. The volume is little more than a luxurious catalogue of Mr. Burne-Jones' work, and as such is quite beyond praise. The chronological list of finished pictures, including cartoons, is of much value, and will greatly aid future workers in the field that produces no fruit to the worshippers of Dagon.



Text-books on feminine loveliness are somewhat less common at this end of the XIX. century than they were in the days when theoretical ideality seemed to have reached its apogee in the pencils of Botticelli or Lippo Lippi, whose womankind possesses as much charm for us now as when their prototypes walked the Tuscan Court. It is the beauty of the Italian awakening that is set to rule and geometrically measured by Agnolo Firenzuola, which the youthful Anglo-American house of James R. Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., of London, has issued with a graceful introduction by that lamented cavalier not unlearned in feminine lore, Theodore Child. The rules for what is beautiful and what is not beautiful to the eye, in woman, are discussed by an aged philosopher, surrounded by a group of charming dames, all entering into the arguments which decide upon the length and breadth of brow and lip as authoritatively as would a learned college of geographers settle the depth of the Red Sea through algebraic equation. The style and language is quite as charming in its frankness and simplicity as was ever that of Father Sinistrari of Ameno; indeed, Firenzuola has been awarded a crown as the writer of the purest Tuscan we possess. His love for female beauty was æsthetical rather than sentimental. He leaves the heart of woman to his friend Boccaccio, and dissects well the separate parts of outward beauty in his friends to make up a composite of superhuman loveliness. The little work is of curious interest as a key to some of the masterpieces of art produced during the Renaissance.